Subject: coin photographs

Sams, Conway Whittle

[Norfolk, VA]

1929

C. WHITTLE SAMS
ATTORNEY AT LAW
308 MAIN ST.
NORFOLK, VA.

June 10th, 1929.

The American Numismatic Society,
156th Street & Broadway,
New York City, N.Y.

My dear Sirs:

I am referred to you by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, to which the enclosed letter that I sent on May 29th, 1929, to the Superintendent of the Mint in Philadelphia, was referred.

I herewith enclose a circular descriptive of one of the volumes of the work on which I am engaged, entitled "The Conquest of Virginia, the First Attempt", so that you can understand the scope of the work.

I would like to have pictures, if they can be readily obtained, of the coins mentioned in my letter of May 29th, and ask that you let me know if I could do so, and what would be the price of the pictures.

They would be useless to me if they are copyrighted. I wish to reproduce them in my book, and therefore, must have the right to reprint them.

Yours very truly,

C. Whittle Sams

CWS/E

May 29th, 1929.

The Superintendent of the Mint,

Philadelphia, Penn.

My dear Sir:

I am engaged in writing a work entitled "The Conquest of Virginia".

Enclosed you will find circulars descriptive of one of the volumes of this series, "The Conquest of Virginia, the First Attempt". The following volume, "The Conquest of Virginia, the Second Attempt", has just been published, but I have not yet collected the reviews on that subject.

I am now engaged in writing "The Conquest of Virginia, the Third Attempt", one chapter of which is entitled, The Coins they used. These coins were made legal tender in the Colony at certain rates fixed by law, and I have described them and given their values in this work, but it would add immensely to the interest of that chapter to have pictures of these coins.

I, therefore, write to you under the supposition that the important department of the Government, which is represented by the mint, would probably be in possession of pictures of the coinage of the various countries and of this period. What I desire is pictures of any of these coins, not copyrighted, so that I could use them freely in my work.

The coins mentioned in the Virginia laws and which circulated at one time in the Colony are as follows:

Royal, or ryal. Royal of 8 = real

Pieces of eight of Spain, also called Peso Duro, Piaster & Spanish Dollar, and the Pillar Dollar.

Sevil Duccatoons.

Pillar Duccatoons, of Flanders.

Eccus of France.

Silver Lewis, of Portugal.

Crusados, old and new, of Portugal.

Old Rix Dollars of the Empire.

Guinea.

Spanish Real.

Mexican Real.

Venetian Ducatoons.

Ecu of France, called Crowns by the English.

Ecu, with the Crown of France.

Ecu with the sun.

The white ecu.

Silver ecu.

Louis d'or)
(of France.
Louis d'argent)

Cross Dollar, of Spain or Burgundy.

Chequeens, or sequins, or the gold ducat of Venice.

Moidores, gold coin of Portugal.

Dutch Dollar.

Arabian chequins, or sequins.

Bit, of West India.

Mexican Shilling.

French Crowns.

Mark of Scotland.

Pistole, a coin of several countries.

Doubloon.

Double Doubloon.

If it be impossible for you to furnish these pictures, would you be so good as to indicate what other branch of the government I should apply to, with a probability of getting them.

Thanking you in advance for any trouble you may take in this connection, I am

Yours very truly,

CWS/E

19th June, 1929

Mr. C. Whittle Sams,
Norfolk, Va.

Dear Sir:

I have been studying your letter over since it came to see if we could really help you. At the present moment our Museum is in the utmost confusion as we are building a large addition and our present building is being radically changed throughout. Consequently, our books are either packed up or in disorder; the same is true of our coins. It is very doubtful if we can do any photographing for several months; also, we have no pictures available of any of the pieces you want. Everything is done on order by photography. Also, it is extremely hard to determine just what is wanted. Take for instance the Royal or ryal. I take it that this is the real or one-eighth of a Spanish dollar, and in none of the cases do you give the approximate dates of the pieces which are mentioned. In a number of instances, your titles duplicate: the Eccus of France is the same as the Ecu of France, and I never heard of the silver 'Lewis' of Portugal; in fact, there was no Luis until recent times as monarch. In nearly every instance it would be impossible to pick out the coin unless we knew the approximate date referred to, as I have said before. In some instances, it would then be haphazard.

However, I doubt if we can do much of anything for you for about a year as we are at a standstill now and will be until spring; then we will be busy for several months getting into shape.

I beg to remain

Very truly yours,

Curator

C. WHITTLE SAMS
ATTORNEY AT LAW
308 MAIN ST.
NORFOLK, VA.

June 24th, 1929.

Mr. Howland Wood,
Curator,
The American Numismatic Society,
Broadway, between 155th & 156th Sts.,
New York City, N.Y.

My dear Sir:

I was much interested in your letter of June 19th, telling me of the disturbed condition in the internal affairs of your Society, and the difficulty which you will be under for some time.

I do not wish to have to copy the whole chapter which I have written on the subject of the "Coins They Used". But these coins were referred to in a familiar way by the Acts of the Virginia Legislature in early days, as if every one knew them. Such references will be found in:

I. Hening's Statute at Large, pp. 308, 397, 410, 493.
III. " " " " pp. 219, 503.
IV. " " " " pp. 52, 179, & 218.

They are also referred to in:

Beverley's History of Virginia, Book 4, page 49.

From the information there obtained, I consulted the Encyclopaedia, &c., to find out what the Acts were talking about, but think it would be much more illuminating to present pictures of the coins themselves. I very much sympathize with a Chinese saying I have heard often, that one picture is worth ten thousand words.

I have also references to the Coin Book, by Holman, 1872, Early Coins of America, page 23. If you know anything of this book, or where I can get a copy of it, I would be obliged to you.

I also would be obliged to you for any further information and assistance you can give me in getting at what you now see that I want.

Yours very truly,

C. W. Sams

CWS/E